

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the: World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

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No. 7/27th Year

19th February 1960



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WCC Asks Ban on All Atomic Tests

(Buenos Aires, Argentina) - The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches has called on nuclear powers to keep working for an agreement for total cessation of atomic testing.

In an appeal to the United States, British and Soviet governments, the 12-member committee asked for continued efforts at the current Geneva talks to reach the aim of discontinuing tests of all types and sizes. The Executive Committee suggested that the three governments make an effort to break the Geneva stalemate by demonstrating "their readiness promptly to negotiate a treaty covering all forms of testing which can now be detected".

Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, is chairman of the Committee which includes representatives from churches in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States. The Committee held its semi-annual meeting last week (Feb. 8-12) in Buenos Aires.

(In another action taken before France exploded its first atomic bomb in the Sahara last weekend, the Committee reiterated an earlier appeal to the French Government not to carry out such tests.

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The action on French tests said, "Noting public announcements that the Government of France is proceeding with nuclear testing in the Sahara, the Executive Committee reaffirms the position that so long as international control is under discussion, powers which have not made tests as yet should not launch them anywhere for military purposes".)

In its statement on the current Geneva talks, the World Council leaders claimed that an eventual treaty is possible only "if a formal agreement to ban the underground testing of small nuclear weapons, at least for a specified period of time" is reached on condition that "arrangements be made for international co-operation in devising more adequate means of detection and for international inspection of explosions for peaceful purposes".

Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, of New York and Philadelphia, PA., director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, told the committee that the Geneva conference is now at a critical point.

"The United States has claimed that there is no present possibility of detecting the explosion underground of smaller nuclear weapons and the United Kingdom insists that no permanent cessation will be acceptable without adequate provision for inspection," the C.C.I.A. official observed.

Dr. Nolde also said that "some leaders in the United States are urging that smaller underground tests should be resumed promptly."

"On the other hand the USSR demands that a treaty should require the cessation of all tests and that, if further methods of inspection are needed, they should be developed subsequently," he said.

"The impasse can only be broken if reasonable concessions are made by both sides," the churchman warned.

The Executive Committee's statement asked for U.S. and U.K. suspension of testing for an agreed period while observing that the Soviet Union would also need to agree to "international co-operation in devising more adequate means of detection." The present appeal by the Executive Committee of the world Christian organization follows up previous statements made by the Council's 90-member Central Committee in 1957 and 1959. (See document attached.)


Other Actions

In other sessions the Executive Committee:

Approved blueprints for a new \$2,500,000 headquarters building to be constructed in Geneva, Switzerland, to replace present overcrowded facilities. The Committee asked, however, that present drawings for the interior of the chapel, the most prominent feature of the building, be reconsidered and new ones submitted for approval. Construction of the 200-office unit structure is now expected to get underway sometime this autumn. (See EPS No. 4)

Announced plans to hold the World Council's Third Assembly November 18-25, 1961, in New Delhi, India, at the Vigyan Bhavan Conference Hall originally built by the Indian Government for a UNESCO conference. (The Assembly was first planned for Ceylon, but the site was changed to India by decision of the WCC's Central Committee last summer.) Plans are subject to approval by the Central Committee at its annual meeting at St. Andrew's, Scotland, August 16-24.

"Jesus Christ - the Light of the World", the Assembly theme, will be studied by local congregations of the Council's 172 member churches. A pre-Assembly study booklet dealing with the main theme and sub-themes of witness, unity, and service will be printed in English, French and German and translated into many other languages for distribution to local churches throughout the world as a means of enabling them to participate in Assembly preparation.



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Between 950 and 1000 participants are expected. Of these 635 are voting delegates and the remainder are advisers, youth participants, and fraternal delegates from National Christian councils and other world Christian bodies. Assembly highlights include public rallies addressed by world Christian leaders with accent on "personal spiritual life, vocation, and public proclamation of the Gospel". Previous assemblies were held in Amsterdam in 1948 and Evanston, Ill. in 1954. Both attracted wide public attention. Asian churches will co-operate in plans for ecumenical teams composed of participants from different countries to visit major Asian centres after the Assembly to report on its work and make contact with local Christians.

Call for Christian Unity

During the five-day session members of the Committee and a crowd estimated at 1500 people packed St. Andrew's Church, Buenos Aires, to hear an African member of the Committee, the Rev. Peter K. Dagadu, call for Christian unity.

Mr. Dagadu, secretary of the Ghana Christian Council, told the worship service that sectarianism was an obstacle to the advance of Christianity in Africa and on other continents.

The Ghana churchman praised the work of the World Council of Churches in helping Christian forces in Africa to demonstrate unity. He asked for continued study and action on the part of the World Council in regard to Africa. Home and family, women's problems, and civic and national responsibility were cited as areas in need of study.

In stressing the need for Christian unity, Mr. Dagadu told of a candidate for baptism who laughed in his face when repeating the part of the Apostle's Creed about One Church. She explained the laughter by saying, "we have five sects working in our village".

"Is the Church really one," he asked. "Isn't this fact obscured by what we see about us?"

Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, New York, chairman of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches, told the group that the World Council believes that the New Testament taught that the Church is one.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ established One Church" he declared. "He calls on us for unity and for truth. We must exhibit both in our lives," Dr. Fry, is president of both the United Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran World Federation. EPS, Geneva

Biblical Scroll Fragments Found in Israeli Desert

(Jerusalem) - Two fragments of ancient Biblical scrolls with sixteen verses from the 13th chapter of the Book of Exodus have been discovered by Israeli archeologists in a cave in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea.

From coins and other articles found with the fragments it has been determined they belonged to followers of Bar-Kochba, who took refuge in the caves with the collapse of their revolt against the Romans in A.D. 135. Survivors of the uprising are believed to have lived as fugitives in the caves for nearly 100 years afterwards.

The fragments, which measure about one by three inches, and are of parchment, were reported to be in a good condition. Although as yet unrolled, it can be seen that they bear verses and are part of a phylactery used in Jewish ritual.

The discovery was made by an archaeological team led by Dr. Yohanan Aharoni, a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. EPS, Geneva.

Vatican May Get Protest on Bishops' Letter

(Rome) - The Foreign Minister of the Dominican Republic has arrived in Rome, possibly to discuss with Vatican officials the pastoral letter of six Dominican Republic Roman Catholic bishops protesting mass arrests of hundreds of the country's citizens by the Trujillo government. (See EPS No. 6)

A report by the New York Times from Rome said it was likely that Foreign Minister Porfirio Herrera Baez would seek to have an appointment with Vatican Secretary of State Domenico Cardinal Tardini, concerning the letter issued in protest against the imprisonment of citizens following a rumour of an assassination plot against General Trujillo.

Total number of arrests has been put at 850 to 1,500. An estimated 120 persons have been sentenced to thirty-year terms at hard labour for participation in the alleged conspiracy. Most of those sentenced were reported to be men in their twenties - lawyers, doctors, engineers, farmers and workers. In addition they were fined a collective total of \$600,000. EPS, Geneva.

Conferences on Church-State Relations Asked

(Boston) - A US Methodist Bishop has proposed a series of conferences between Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders to appraise "the disintegrating wall between Church and State" in the U.S.A.

The conferences would seek to discuss "where we agree and to admit frankly where we differ and why", Bishop Richard C. Raines of Indianapolis, Ind., told a meeting of the National Conference on Church and State, sponsored by Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

"My conviction," Bishop Raines said, "is that both Protestants and Catholics have been tearing such large stones out of the wall which must separate Church and State that tolerance of this activity borders on treason". He said that the separation principle is good for all churches including the Roman Catholic Church which he described as in a better position because it is not a state Church. "Roman Catholicism in the United States has prospered splendidly," he observed, and is "the most wholesome and sound Catholicism in the world".

EPS, Geneva

Rights of Spanish Workers Urged

(Madrid) - Spain's twelve Roman Catholic Archbishops meeting in conference in Madrid have issued a strong plea for just recognition of workers' rights under the government's economic stabilization programme.

The statement, the first of its kind issued since 1956, reiterated earlier appeals for austerity on the part of the rich and more active concern for the welfare of the poor.

"We remind all once more," the archbishops said, "of the duty of working for a more just distribution of goods - goods of all kinds - and a more equitable distribution of the burdens to shorten the distance (between social classes) and suppress irritating unevenness."

EPS, Geneva.

Korean Relief Agency Denies Bias Charges

(Seoul) - The National Christian Council of Korea has vehemently denied published charges that church relief agencies in Korea discriminate against people who oppose the World Council of Churches.

The Rev. Ho Joon Yu, executive secretary of the NCKC branded as "completely false" the charges which had been made by the International Council of Christian Churches, an ultra fundamentalist group. He said the accusations published in the ICC's "Christian Beacon" were "distressing misrepresentations of the Korean church aid situation".

He said that as the result of the split last fall in the Presbyterian Church of Korea when a minority group opposed continued membership in the World Council of Churches, it had been voted to remove all members of this "anti-ecumenical" group from representation on KCWS (Korean Church World Service) boards (See EPS No. 48, 1959). He said this was done on the justification that "a Church which officially opposes the ecumenical movement should not have a share in the making of policy and the administration of an organisation which is the official agency in Korea representing the WCC's Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees".

However, he stressed, this move "does not effect the eligibility of any needy members (of the dissident group) for receiving relief supplies, whatever their attitude to the WCC may be."

EPS Geneva

Evangelism Campaign Charted in Japan

(Tikyo) - Plans for an intensive long-range evangelism campaign in which appeals on radio and through other mass media will form a major part of the programme, have been announced by AVACO the (Audio Visual Activities Committee) of the Japan National Council of Churches.

Focal point of the campaign will be Hokkaido, the northern-most of Japan's four main islands, where an initial experiment will be carried out March 9-20 in two villages. The campaign will include radio broadcasts, films, two public meetings, home visitation and distribution of special tracts. On the basis of this experiment, plans will be made for a more extensive campaign beginning in April.

An AVACO spokesman said the programme will be unique in the history of evangelism in Japan because while all the methods employed have been used before, it will combine them for the first time "for maximum impact and effectiveness." The campaign will be organized by the Hokkaido branch of AVACO. Funds will be provided by the Division of World Mission of The Methodist Church (US).

EPS, Geneva

US Presbyterians Map Closer African Ties

(New York) - The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. will set up a special committee to foster greater understanding of African churches.

Formation of the committee resulted from a two-day consultation held in New York by the Church's Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations. Attending were 150 African and U.S. representatives of the church, education, industry, labour and other fields.

Dr. Arthur L. Miller, Church moderator, said that although the decision to set-up the new committee was not an official denominational action, it indicates a strengthened emphasis in the future on African affairs. Plans call for regional African-American consultations and special local church study projects.

Named as chairman of the committee was Dr. James H. Robinson, pastor of the Church of the Master, New York, and head of Crossroads Africa, a programme through which about 150 US youth visit Africa each summer.

EPS, Geneva

CWS Reports 1959 Programme

(Atlantic City) - U.S. Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches shipped more than 356,300,000 pounds of relief supplies overseas last year for distribution to needy in 41 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

US government-donated food surplus supplies totalling 356,321,173 pounds - by far the largest part of the goods - went to feed an estimated seven million people. A report on the 1959 programme was presented to the 10th annual meeting of the Board of Managers of the agency, which is the relief and rehabilitation wing of the National Council of Churches.

The Board elected Dr. Sidney D. Gamble, social economist as chairman, to succeed the late Harper Sibley, of Rochester, N.Y. Dr. Gamble who has been serving as CWS vice-chairman, is recording secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA, president of Princeton in Asia and trustee of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. EPS, Geneva

Churches Warned About Christianity's Divisions

(Melbourne) - Bishop J. Lesslie Newbigin, chairman of the International Missionary Council, declared here that Christianity's divisions make "a mockery of our missions" and are "a public denial of the sufficiency of Calvary."

"No task is more urgent than the task of penitent and patient wrestling with these divisions, till Christ Himself restores to us the unity which is His Will," he declared. Bishop Newbigin addressed 430 delegates from 18 denominations attending the first National Conference of Australian Churches.

"The Life and Mission of the Church are not two things but one," Bishop Newbigin stated. Its life is in its mission. The missionary work of the Church is not one of the strands of which world history is composed; it is the clue to world history, the gospel is the announcement of the end of world history. It concerns the whole human race and there is an obligation in it to bring it to the whole human race without delay.

For this reason, he urged, it is essential that Christians understand the signs of the times, "not as merely an intellectual affair, but involving us in commitment as God's witnesses to the ends of the earth. That is why you cannot drop foreign missions out of Christianity without losing the core of the Gospel".

Another Conference speaker, M.M. Thomas, of the Mar Thoma Church of Malabar, India, called upon Christians to be a part of the social and ideological revolutions of this era as "prophets, ambassadors, and reconcilers."

"We must seek to build a responsible society with order, freedom and justice held in balance," the speaker said. "Towards this end the Church must be a sacramental community and fulfill its mission in a world of revolution."

The Rev. Hans-Reudi Weber, executive secretary of the Department on the Laity of the World Council of Churches, said the Church has "for too long been bedevilled by a concern with numbers whereas Her only concern should be to become a mature Church participating in Christ's ministry and mission".

"The great need is for the Church to undergo a double conversion," he declared, "- a conversion away from conformity to this world and a growing into the mind of Christ, and a conversion to participation in Christ's mission to the world. This conversion to holy worldliness makes Her free from the world in order to serve the world."

The nine-day meeting was sponsored by the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches. The aim of the conference was "to bring together a group of Church people so that all may come to a deeper understanding of each other and of God's will for His Church..." (See EPS No. 4) EPS, Geneva

In Brief

Dr. Henry F. Schuh, of Columbus, Ohio, has been unanimously nominated as honorary president of the new American Lutheran Church now in the process of formation by the merger of the American, Evangelical and United Evangelical Lutheran Churches. Dr. Schuh, one of the chief architects of the new body, will complete ten years as president of the American Lutheran Church in 1960. The constituting convention for the new Church will be held April 22-24.

* *

Long-range expansion plans have been approved for the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico, the Island's only Protestant theological school. The board of trustees has endorsed a programme to build new dormitories, an auditorium, library, faculty homes and a dining-hall for the institution. The plans will be put into effect when they receive approval of the seminary's six sponsoring denominations in the US - the Methodist, Baptist, Disciples and Brethren Churches and the United Church of Christ and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

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Moslems living in West Germany will erect a mosque with an attached cultural centre and hostel in Munich. The site for the new building will be donated by the Bavarian State government. It will be the fourth mosque in Germany. Others are located in Hamburg and Frankfurt and Berlin.

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More than two-thirds of the US conscientious objectors to military service come from Mennonite or Brethren churches, according to a report of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors. A Board survey of 1,051 c.o.'s or 85 per cent of the total registered showed 1,074 affiliated with Mennonite or Brethren Churches, 43, with the Religious Society of Friends, another historic peace church, and 18 Methodists. Only 22 came from the ranks of other major Protestant denominations.

* *

The Rev. Elder G. Hawkins, moderator of the New York Presbytery, has been named unanimously as its candidate for the moderator of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. If elected at the Assembly's 172nd meeting (May 18-25) Mr. Hawkins will become the first Negro to head a predominantly white major Protestant denomination in the U.S.

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The Church Peace Union will make a three-year study of religion and the state in South and Southeast Asia. Funds for the study have been provided by a \$45,000 grant of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The inter-creedal US organization was endowed by the American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1914.

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All 58 bishops of the Orthodox Church of Greece will meet in special Assembly in Athens on May 4 by a decree of the Greek Ministry for Cults issued at the request of the Church's Holy Synod. Topics on the agenda include nomination of new bishops to fill eight vacant Metropolitan Sees, naming of candidate Archimandrites for election as bishops in the future and discussion of the government bill amending the Church's constitution.

* *

Membership of the Methodist Church of Great Britain declined in 1959 for the fifth successive year. The decrease was 3,123 reducing the total membership to 733,658. Although some 24,000 new members joined last year, their number was offset by the number of members who died, or withdrew from the denomination.

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Archimandrite Anatolios Georgiadis has been consecrated at a service in Athens, as Archbishop of Tiberias in Israel. The See is under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Archbishop Anatolios formerly served in Athens as Exarch (deputy) of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

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The celebration of marriages in St. Peter's, the Vatican between Roman Catholics and non-Catholics has been prohibited by a decree issued by Cardinal Tardini, Vatican Secretary of State.

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The Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarch^{ate} of the Orthodox Church, Constantinople, has voted to establish a central Orthodox institute for the study of the early Fathers of the church. The institute will be located near Salonika, Greece, in a monastery belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

* *

The Swedish Free Church Missionary Society has announced that when the Belgian Congo becomes politically independent next June, it will turn over to national church groups all its church buildings, schools, land and other property in the country. The Society will continue to pay the salaries of Congolese missionaries, but all institutions will be administered by the Congolese churches. The Society has had work in the country since 1881.

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A total of 14 million German Marks (\$3,333,333.) has been collected in response to the "Bread for the World" appeal of the German churches to provide food for hungry peoples in underdeveloped countries. The amount is the largest ever collected through a church appeal in Germany. A Committee of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Free Churches appointed to administer the fund, has announced that it has already allocated 6.3 million Marks (\$1,435,714) for 34 different projects, including preventive disease programmes.

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Roman Catholic organizations in Cologne, Germany, have established a Centre for training personnel for work in under-developed countries.

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Document

Statement of WCC Executive Committee on the Cessation of Nuclear Weapons Testing.

In response to expressions of profound concern by Christians in many lands, the World Council of Churches has in recent years urged the cessation of nuclear weapons testing with provision for international inspection and control. Its basic position was set forth in Statements on Atomic Tests and Disarmament adopted at New Haven in 1957 and subsequent Statements were more explicitly directed to the problems which emerged in the process of negotiating an international treaty. Church leaders in various countries have brought these views to the attention of highest government officials. Officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs have communicated them to the representatives of all states members of the United Nations and, more particularly, have interpreted them in personal consultations with the heads of the delegations at the Geneva Conference representing the United Kingdom, the USSR, and the United States.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, in session at Buenos Aires, expresses appreciation of such progress as has resulted from persistent effort at the Geneva Conference but cannot avoid uneasiness over the failure thus far to have resolved the differences which prevent the conclusion of a treaty. The importance of adequate inspection provisions, whether to ensure compliance with treaty commitments or to point the way to verified disarmament, must be recognised and the present inability to distinguish the underground explosions of small nuclear weapons from natural disturbances ought not to be ignored. Nevertheless, the difficulties here encountered cannot and must not be regarded as insuperable. As members of the Executive Committee, we therefore express our views on the kind of action which is demanded in the present situation.

We urge the governments concerned to continue to commit themselves to the objective of a comprehensive treaty which will include the cessation of all forms of nuclear weapons testing-atmosphere, space, under water, and underground. This commitment will become more meaningful when it is uniformly supported in each government and fortified by an informed and vocal public opinion.

In order to honour such a commitment, we believe that governments should demonstrate their readiness promptly to negotiate a treaty covering all forms of testing which can now be detected. These would apparently include the larger underground explosions as well as those in atmosphere, space and under water. Yet this is not enough. A formal agreement ought also to be concluded to ban the underground testing of smaller nuclear weapons, at least for a specified period of time, on condition that arrangements be made for international co-operation in devising more adequate means of detection and for international inspection of explosions for peaceful purposes. The concessions which will thus be required of both sides are in our judgement justifiable and imperative, if man is to act responsibly in this nuclear space age.

We welcome the apparent relaxation of international tensions, although we recognise the basic causes of suspicion and distrust have not been removed. The conclusion of a treaty to cease nuclear weapons testing, as we have here conceived it, would contribute to greater confidence and provide for the forthcoming committee of the Committee of Ten on Disarmament, both a healthy climate and an agreed start on procedures for international inspection.

